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The Psychos

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Recommended Citation

Stevenson, Paula N., "The Psychos" (2019). *Graduate School of Art Theses*. ETD 118. <https://doi.org/10.7936/xmpd-vm28>.

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The Psychos

by

Paula N. Stevenson

A thesis presented to the
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts
Washington University in St. Louis

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

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ABSTRACT

My current body of work is a series of drawings that juxtapose characters of fiction and reality in an attempt to explore the relationship between horror film and contemporary social issues. I strive to render an accurate portrayal of the face to draw the viewer into questioning the troubling narrative these characters illuminate. I focus on retelling stories of fear and horror, and crime and infamy. I want my work to convey ethical dilemmas as they are present within the relationship between horror movie antagonists and the audience (all of us). It is these concerns I attempt to visualize in, my installation, *The Psychos*. I want viewers to experience my drawings and enter into the narratives by questioning their presence. Horror films offer a shared narrative. They invite us to examine social issues while keeping us entertained. This text describes my current work as a manifestation of these ideas, images, and possibilities.

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INTRODUCTION

Horror movies often anticipate our cultural acknowledgment of specific social issues, and the characters within these films, I believe, further reflect this idea. In connection to the current state of the US, under the rule of president Donald Trump, the horror genre seems to have renewed interest in the “monstrous”. Previous insights on the horror genre, and more specifically the location of the “monster”, appear quite relevant to our present situation; such as Mark Edmundson¹ when he argues that:

We find ourselves in a culture where the Gothic idiom has slipped over from fiction and began to shape and regulate our perception of reality, trusting us into a world in which crazy militia men, deranged priests, panoptic power, bizarre molesters, Freddy, Jason and Leatherface constitute reality. There are – to more and more of us – what’s out there.²

I consider Edmundson’s statement that the conventions of the horror film genre can cross over into reality, as applicable to a contemporary interpretation of monstrosity and relative to my artist practice. Exploring the concept of a human’s “monstrous” nature further, I focus on “monstrosity” as it appears in horror film and US culture, depicted by specific individuals. I accredit this evil nature with the *psycho*. Maintaining a leading role in the slasher film subgenre, to me, this relentless, irrational, narcissistic, power-wielding, serial offender, character mirrors the twenty-first century criminal in the USA.

In my recent work *The Psychos*, I translate my concern for the continual decline of morality in the US through the medium of portrait drawing, employing the role of the *psycho* (also referred to as “serial killer” throughout this text) as its representative. The part I play is not only that of the artist but also as the director, constructing and presenting my dialogue to the audience. Each drawing is the act of rendering and isolating the images — a visualization of imprisonment. I hope that by adapting the traditional portrait and movie still, the drawings will illuminate a relationship between contemporary society and the horror genre.

Monstrous psychos, on-screen killers, and collective nightmares all fit into the realm of fear and horror. As a society, we distance ourselves from what we fear, placing the fear within the world of fiction. Even though we distance what is gruesome and dark, most of us still surround ourselves with it in film and the news, where we explore these fears, letting them play out on screen. As an artist, I believe artwork can offer a similar type of experience. Inspired by the genre of horror and depictions of human monstrosity, I use my work to reposition the current narrative for the political situation of the United States of America within the context of a horror film, and in an effort to connect to an audience, I share this narrative through drawing.

DRAWING

I see drawing as thinking, as evidence of thinking, evidence of going from one place to another. One draws to define one thing from another.

Vija Celmins, Conversation with Chuck Close³

Charcoal is this incredibly fragile material. I'm making images of paintings out of dust.

Robert Longo, Interview with Keanu Reeves⁴

As a person I'm interested in people, as an artist I am interested in images.

Marlene Dumas, *Black Paintings* (1991-2)

As I draw, the chaotic world around me fades away. I work to render the millions of details now holding my attention. Initially, drawing was a means by which to understand me and the world around me — describing only the people or places relative to myself — mainly, translating the meaning of the real world as an image through drawing. For me, these images exist both internally and externally, and through the medium of charcoal, I can recreate them.

Working with charcoal, I can make a range of marks, and explore the relationship between the medium and the flat surface. Charcoal can create delicate and sensitive lines and marks, then merely turning a charcoal stick on its side makes a broad swooshing mark. I can smudge or rub it away leaving only the faintest of traces. This flexibility of drawing is essential to my practice. There's also an immediacy of drawing, of thinking in drawing, which is vital for me. I am in control of the speed of the process. I can work quickly, rendering the emotion I feel instantly, or I can slow down to render every tiny detail. Also, each drawing influences the next, since one leads into the other, and the lessons from the previous transfer to the next drawing — each time I discover new and better ways to apply the medium.

My primary use of drawing is towards representing the likeness of a subject. I work with different kinds of references and refer to this collection of images and things throughout my working process. Vija Celmins⁵ uses found images, to create detailed, eye-catching drawings that reference the original object or image. She approaches the same subjects, most commonly of those found in nature, through several different reiterations, all of which are thematically the

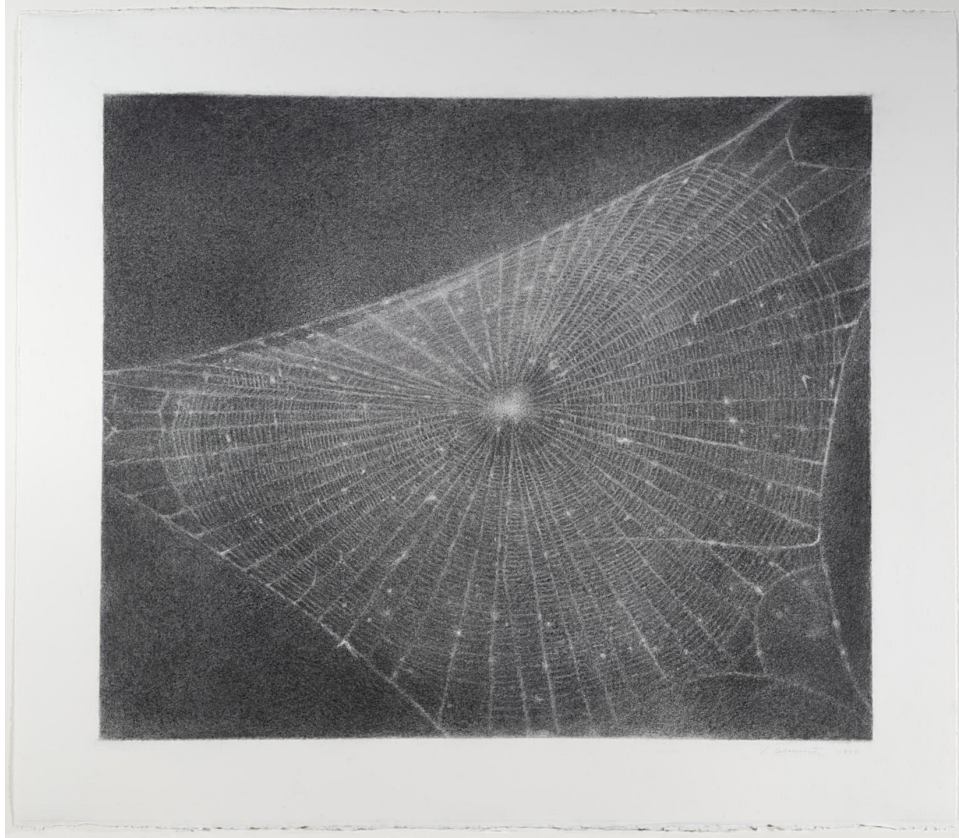


Figure 1. Vija Celmins, *Web #1*, 1999. Charcoal on paper. 22.25 x 25.5 in. Collection of Anthony d'Offay, London. Source: https://hammer.ucla.edu/exhibitions/2007/vija-celmins/#gallery_d1508f5e846cd8592a5386af7f2977b3cf96ca7a

same yet distinct in their depiction. In her charcoal drawing, *Web #1* (fig. 1), the web stretches across the surface, touching all four edges, creating strong diagonals across a picture plane with no visible horizon line. This painstaking rendering is typical of Celmins style, where she uses her chosen medium to recapture a fleeting and momentary image. To Vija Celmins “[t]he photograph is an alternate subject, another layer that creates distance. And distance creates an opportunity to view the work more slowly and to explore your relationship to it. I treat the photograph as an object, to scan and re-make in my art.”⁶ In my artist practice, screen grabs or stills taken from movies act as my photographic source and offer a distance from which I can explore the depicted information separate from the original context. Overall, I see Celmins approach to drawing as the investigation of an existing image. Considering this approach, I

examine how the significance tied to the recognizable subject matter, might acquire an equal, if not greater, meaning when depicted as a work of art. Moving forward, my approach to drawing seeks to involve the viewer's connection in addition to their emotional response.

Known for his realistic drawings, Robert Longo⁷ uses the audience's relationship with the image as a tool for social commentary. He incorporates current news, situating his reproductions within a contemporary context. In an interview at the Brooklyn Museum, Longo expresses how "[a]rt differs from a movie or time-based work in that art is not linear. Art enables you to create your own narrative. The audience can read it backward, forwards, however, they want...and the experience is always twofold: the way you look at something and the way you remember it."⁸ I see this as drawing's ability to also stop time, extracting out one moment and portraying the emotion from the event. Before the game against the Oakland Raiders at the Edward Jones Dome, the players of the St. Louis Rams walked out onto the field in a "hands up, don't shoot" gesture in response to the Michael Brown grand jury decision and the following protests in Ferguson, Missouri (fig. 2). In *Untitled (St. Louis Rams, Hands Up)* (fig. 3) Longo renders this specific scene to direct the viewers' attention to the subsequent political and social nature and introduces a new setting from which to continue the dialogue. My question moving forward was how incorporating a human subject affects the representation of the image?



Figure 2. St. Louis Rams wide receiver Stedman Bailey (12), wide receiver Tavon Austin (11), tight end Jared Cook (89), wide receiver Chris Givens (13), and wide receiver Kenny Britt Brown (81) before a game against the Oakland Raiders at the Edward Jones Dome. USA Today Sports via Reuters.

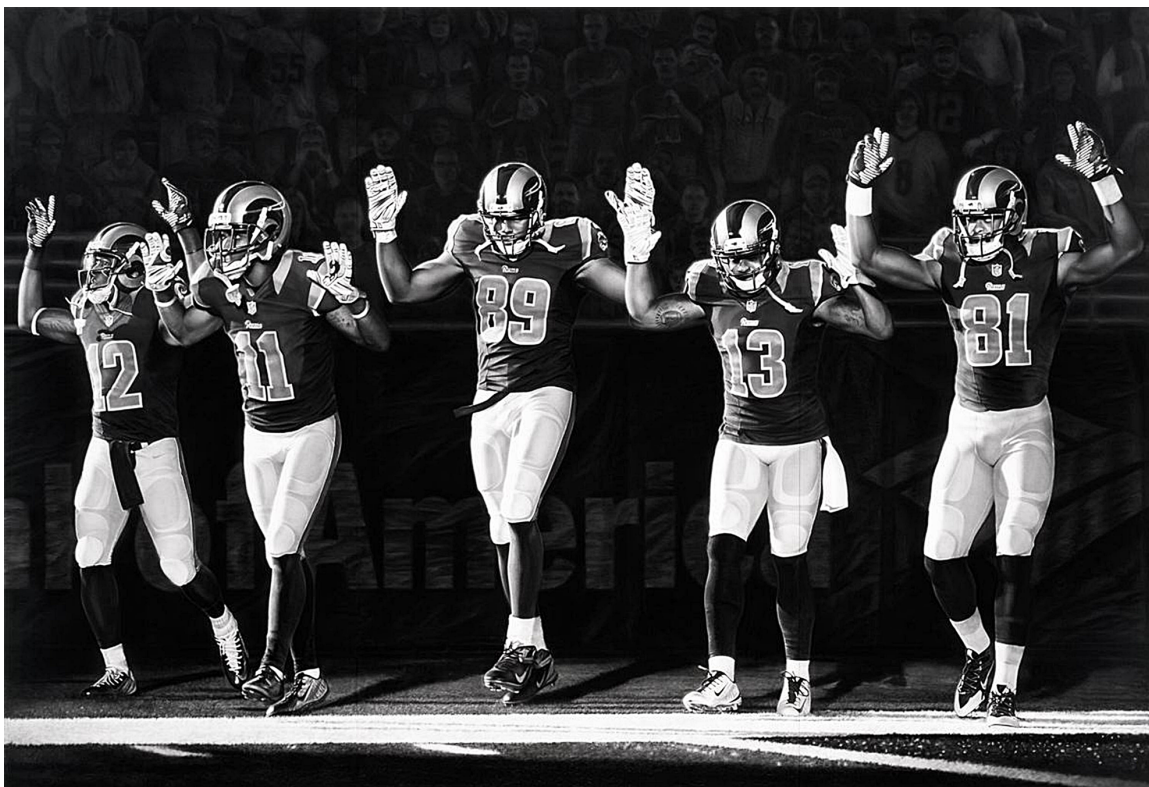


Figure 3. Robert Longo, *Untitled (St. Louis Rams, Hands Up)*, 2016. Charcoal on mounted paper. 100 x 146 in. © Robert Longo, Collection of the artist. Metro Pictures, New York.

The face, the eyes, the hands, the human form as subject matter plays a central role in most of the work I produce. Most commonly I consider the role of the portrait. John Gage⁹ accounts for the role of the head in portraiture stating:

The human head is the chief vehicle of social intercourse, through expressive conversation; and we usually expect the representations of heads to embody such lively qualities of the features as would be conveyed to us in real life. This is what we interpret as 'likeness', and what turns an effigy – a mere aggregation of surfaces features[...]– into a portrait.¹⁰

The focus here is on the relationship between the depiction of human anatomy and its ability to convey a 'likeness' to the viewer. As an artist making work in an image-saturated culture, to me, the portrait, in essence, reflects the artist as well as the surrounding environment. In *Portraiture*, Shearer West¹¹ describes other applications for the portrait in addition to the artists intentions saying that "[w]hile a portrait can be concerned with likeness as contained in a person's physical features, it can also represent the subject's social position or 'inner life', such as their character or virtues."¹² Marlene Dumas¹³ creates work that focuses on the issues of representation and the dismantling of the traditional portrait. She also considers herself in relation to the images she produces, exploring notions of politics and guilt. In her ink portrait series titled, *Black Drawings* (fig. 4), with the tight cropping of the face, the figures allude to the tension between individuals and society. Also, Dumas explores the context of group representation, using black as both the medium and subject matter, to comment on the racist system of apartheid in South Africa. I see this as a focus on the different types within that group, and not on the figure's individuality. When I create portraits, I pay equal attention to what drawing does to an image, and what the image does for the drawing. Over the past couple of years, realism and portraiture both took a back seat to the abstraction of monsters and nightmares. As it seems when I can hold on to the specifics, the drawing process is almost always more interesting, *The Psychos* series, brings the

details back to the forefront of my practice to ground my work somewhere between the real and the imagined.



Figure 4. Marlene Dumas, *Black Drawings*, 1991-2. Ink on paper, 112 drawings, drawing 25 x 17.5 cm. each. Collection of DE Pont Museum. Source: FAD Magazine. Online.

HORROR & CINEMA

“Do you like scary movies?”

Ghostface, *Scream* (1998)¹⁴

A significant part of my practice is spent researching the different ideas and notions surrounding horror. This research is essential to my practice to better understand the history of contemporary horror and its evolution to the present. American horror films following the 1960's, Dave Kehr¹⁵ explains, replace the monstrous creatures with "series of highly successful, independently produced films refocused the genre on human monsters and human monstrosities."¹⁶ The 'monster' as human rather than a supernatural being, is a critical concern in my practice as I believe this shift resonates with people who may fear monsters, but not as much as the people we live amongst and the societies we live in.

The slasher film is a subgenre in horror known for the introduction of the human killer as central to the narrative. In *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*, Carol Clover¹⁷ establishes what certifies as a 'slasher film' more in-depth.¹⁸ She claims, with little variation, they contain: a psycho-killer, a terrible place, a variety of weapons of death, a group of young victims, and a "Final Girl" who only survives to be rescued or to dispatch the killer herself.¹⁹ *The Psychos* draws from this, focusing on the role of the psycho-killer (most commonly, though not always, a white male) and how the endless revival of the character coincides with current political and social fears in the US.

Over the course of less than a hundred years, the depiction of evil continues to change, and US culture has become increasingly more violent. Through the advent of the movie camera and photography, the public has become increasingly more aware of what happens during war and even sees real violence from the battlefield through those mediums. Scenes displaying horrific acts of war, murder, rape, death, mutilation, and all manner of horror that we fear appear as conventional for horror films. What draws my attention here is the notion of morality, and how our culture displays such individuals devoid of morals. One central theme of horror is

questioning what morality is and what role each person plays in upholding that moral code as a member of society. Horror movies like visual art speak about the culture and times they are made in.

The psychological basis of horror film in its ability to take the form of social fears and anxieties is one reason why the genre fascinates me. Horror films not only reflect the values and ideology of our culture but also tell about the time and place. As Bruce Kawin²⁰ emphasizes, “[h]orror is part of our response to the world,” implying that horror acts as a visual statement, questioning key issues within society.²¹ I draw from this outlook on human nature, considering the method horror uses to visualize threats of the present world. Visually, news media refers to these individuals as criminals, whereas, in a slasher film narrative, they appear as homicidal maniacs, or serial killers. This figure entertains the audience while posing questions about morality and evil human nature. John Carpenter²² explains the two different types of evil in horror film:

One is all about where evil is, the location of it. So we imagine ourselves around a campfire and the wise man or whoever is talking to us about the location of evil and he says ‘the evil is out there in the dark.’ It’s beyond the woods, it’s the other tribe; it’s the people who don’t look like us, that don’t speak like us. And that’s the external evil. That’s the Other, people who aren’t like us. But the other location of evil, same setting[...]and the wise man says ‘actually, evil is right in here. It’s in our own evil hearts.’ That particular story is a harder one to tell.²³

The second type of evil, Carpenter describes, is where the location of evil is found in contemporary horror, illustrated by the film’s antagonist. And it is these homicidal maniacs that command my attention, for their presence warns of the impending danger yet to come.

Then there is also the matter of the ‘male gaze’. E. Ann Kaplan²⁴ discusses the concept of the *male gaze* as it relates to film saying “[...] men gaze at women, who become objects of the gaze; the spectator, in turn, is made to identify with this male gaze, and to objectify the women

on the screen; and the camera's original 'gaze' comes into play in the very act of filming."²⁵ Men usually play the attackers, and women are usually their victims. He is commonly masked, fat, deformed, or dressed as a woman. However, "he can also be a smiling face within the family and not just a faceless knife-wielding killer from outside."²⁶ I'm not suggesting that only white males can be killers, however that serial killers most commonly are white and male. As such, the killers in the horror genre, I see as more realistic than fictive.

Watching these movies made me ask a lot of questions. I wonder, how does this shift in morality and violence affect society? I don't think that fear itself has changed; it still has the ability to control and limit individuals. I believe we have more to fear and media intensifies those fears by showing us more of them. In *Nightmare in Red, White and Blue*, John Kenneth Muir explains that, "[w]hat's happening in the world is reflected in our nightmares."²⁷ Attempting to make sense of these nightmares, I work them out through different series, depicted as both sleep and waking nightmares.

WORKING IN SERIES

Fantasy abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters: united with her, she is the mother of the arts and the origin of their marvels.

Francisco de Goya, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*²⁸

Working in series is a large part of my practice, where I try to narrow my focus is on the development of one idea. Though I vary my approach, several reoccurring themes are apparent, such as the theme of nightmares, the point of view being internal and external. During my first year in the program, I produced *Nothing but A Dream* (fig. 5), the drawings serve as a record of the frightening nighttime episodes. The series grew out of my interest in dream psychology, a desire to understand the potential connection between my mental state and nightmares, and my belief that nightmares are a visual representation of our mind working through fears.

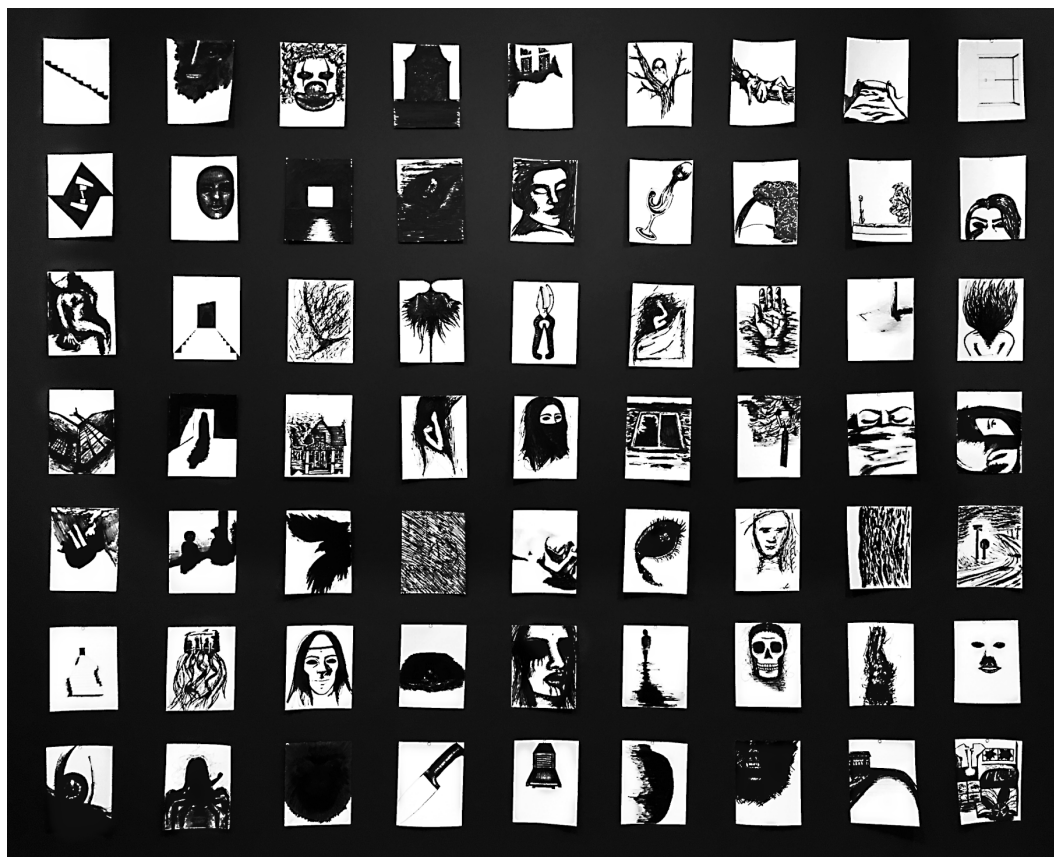


Figure 5. Paula Stevenson, *Nothing but A Dream*, 2016-17, Ink on paper. 63 drawings, 94 x 104 in. 10 x 8 in. each.

The research completed for the project led me to the theory that dream imagery, whether pleasant or frightening, forms from our knowledge and images of the preexisting world.

Applying this theory, then monsters that horrify us ultimately come from our minds, and likewise from the psyche of the viewer. When dreams appear in horror films, they often show the dreamer and the viewer what is going on in the waking world.²⁹ After a year of exploring internal nightmares, my work shifted outward, exploring questions of morality and the creation of monsters.

The history of the monster is also a history of the darker side of the understanding of what it means to be human. These creatures belong to dark places, those underworlds—abysses—because they embody our lack of knowledge, and mirror it in their savagery and disorderly, heterogeneous asymmetries of shape. For this reason, both historical and contemporary artists portray extremes of physical monstrosity to convey mental states and exaggerate the terrors of society. One of these artists I have studied in-depth is Francisco de Goya (1746 - 1828).³⁰ His paintings and series of prints depict stories about the human follies and corrupt nature, to critique contemporary Spanish society. In his print series *Los Caprichos*, plate 43: *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* (fig. 6), a man lays hunched over a desk, as he is asleep his rational thoughts are gone, leaving him unaware of the surrounding creatures that threaten on all sides. At the center of the composition, staring not at the sleeping man, but us, forcing the viewer to participate in the image — the monsters of his dreams now threatening us.



Figure 6. Francisco de Goya, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, 1799. Etching, aquatint, drypoint, and burin. image: 8 7/16 x 5 7/8 in. (21.5 x 15 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, <http://www.metmuseum.org> (accessed April 10, 2019).

In this ominous image, I see Goya's mental state characterized by his dark vision of humanity. From my viewpoint, Goya is proposing that cultural fear of monsters and the fear they inspire, whether depicted through an investigation of the past or present, will never cease to exist. In this regard, monsters are not only an archetype, but they also reflect the darker aspects of human nature as eternal magnifying our inherent destruction. The representation of monstrous nature formed the foundation for my abstract painting series titled *Drowning in a Sea of Monsters* (fig 7).

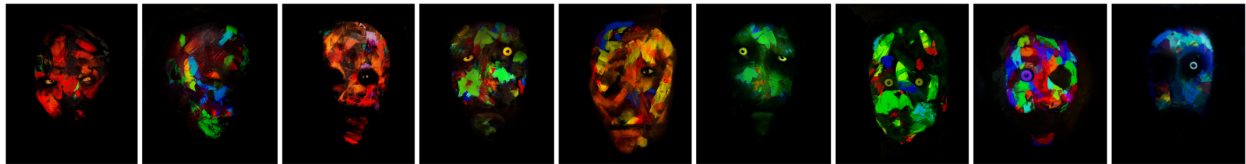


Figure 7. Paula Stevenson, *Drowning in a Sea of Monsters*, 2017. Acrylic on canvas. 24 x 20 in. each

My fascination is with the symbolic nature of monsters, how they elude to societies distortion and magnification of immorality. Based on their behavior that steps outside the rules of society, monsters create a visual separation between good and evil.

Piotr Uklański³¹ focuses on the effect of reproduction on glorifying figures associated with historical evil. His two photographic series titled, *The Nazis* (fig. 8) and *Real Nazis* (fig. 9), uses film to visualize the film industry's continued installment of the Nazi figure. *The Nazis* is a suite of prints that include headshots of different actors dressed in Nazi regalia. His first series displays only photographs of film and television actors, then in *Real Nazis* photographs of real Nazis sit amongst the actors. In *Real Nazis* the edition published by Patrick Frey, Uklański expresses his concern for the presence of Nazi imagery in media stating:

Beneath all the insignia and accouterments of evil lurks the iconography of media kitsch and ridicule. It's all about the power of costumes and the costumes of power, about the glamour of evil, the glistening shine of fake medals made of fake gold.³²



Figure 8. Piotr Ukleński, *The Nazis*, 1998. 164 Chromogenic black and white and color photographs mounted on panels. 14 x 10 in. each



Figure 9. Piotr Ukleński, *Real Nazis*, 2017. 203 Chromogenic prints, text plate: 48.7 x 33.4 cm, Installation view, Neue Galerie, Kassel, *documenta 14*, photo: Nils Klinger

The grid layout of the images questions how the actors seduce and blind the viewer to the evil nature of Nazism. Likewise, the series captures *mythification* through the lens of art while corresponding to the techniques of manipulating evil found in the horror film genre.

Creating an entire series of work centralized around one theme forces me to consider the content and the context in greater depth. In a contemporary exploration of the monster narrative, what happens to our understanding of the monster and its image, when “we recognize the monster’s world as our own, and the monster as an inherent part of it.”³³

“Is evil something you are? Or is it something you do?”

Patrick Bateman, *American Psycho* (2000)³⁴

THE PSYCHOS



Figure 10. Paula Stevenson, *The Psychos*, 2019. Charcoal and graphite on panel. 45 panels, 16 x 12 in. each.

In my most recent work, *The Psychos* (fig. 10), I draw faces of serial killers that appear in horror films. To find these killers, I researched the horror film genre, covering at first a wide range of horror films and types of killers. Certain characters warranted inclusion over others, due to their notoriety in the horror genre as killers. However, the list needed further advisement. To narrow down the list of films even further, I would compare each of the movies and their characters, to the following requirements:

1. American-made films only. *My concern is with the evil found in US culture.*
2. Films produced following *Psycho* (1960)*
**arguably the first slasher and inspiration for the subgenre.*

3. Human, not otherworldly. *Again, my concern is the US' involvement in creating evil.*
4. White male antagonist is central to the story. *This character reflects our current social narrative and the notoriety of serial killers being most commonly, white males.*

Each of these distinctions singles out the characters that I feel best to represent the overall goal for the project.

The series consists of forty-five portraits, of forty-five psychos. The number forty-five is about both our current president as well as the previous. I find it necessary to note, the portraits, with exception to Donald Trump, do not directly refer to or represent any specific president. The forty-five portraits visualize our current position in history, by depicting the “individuals” that came before. Moreover, the character-portraits themselves convey a cinematic timeline, taking the viewer back to the first considered American slasher film, Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*.

I draw each portrait on a separate panel using charcoal and graphite to create the black and white picture. As I draw, I also study the work, analyzing the physical object with cinematic conventions. During the observation, I see several levels of spatial ambiguity emerge with the representation of a three-dimensional on a two-dimensional surface. First, each drawing extends to the edge of the panel, however, alluding to the original screened image, the sides are left white separating them from the drawing and the wall. The natural extension of the cradled panel allows the drawing to read as both a two-dimensional and three-dimensional object. The panel as a three-dimensional object references the absent head while the surface drawing becomes the face of the piece.

The Psychos are ‘a copy of a copy’, referring to slasher film sequels often as the ‘original’. I gather the images from films via *screen captures* or *screenshots* — still frames taken from a digital video — then copied and translated into drawings. As such, the relationship

between the copy and the original is considerably tertiary, three or four times removed. By the time the picture becomes a drawing, it's already been reproduced more than once. To express a close likeness to the character, I draw the images using a projector. With this relatively minimal alteration, the elements associated with the character's traits remain visible. A critical step in my practice is isolating the character from both the screen and the landscape of the film.

Manipulating the image — cropped to focus on the face and the photograph as drawing — is essential to separate the character from the singular and linear narrative. I also see this method as removing the characters from time—situating them in reality, no longer bound by time.

While creating *The Psychos*, I consider how the arrangement could trigger potential associations. When in order by year, my concern was regarding the viewer and their potential assignment of each portrait to a specific president. Considering a different arrangement, away from a chronological approach, other concerns arose. Most important, the drawings must present to the viewer as a group both physically and visually. To achieve a group reading I broke the issue down into two questions. First, I tried to unify their differences, i.e., light/tonal value, face position, mask versus no mask. Second, I wanted to place the characters without bringing attention to one individual only, i.e. visual hierarchy, eye movement, balance. I realized that all these formal elements listed above exist in a single portrait. I then experimented with the portrait of the current president to achieve the value and photo-mosaic grid. Thus, to further situate Donald Trump within the horror film narrative, I use his photographic portrait to create a value grid (fig. 11) for the entire piece, *The Psychos*.



Figure 11. The images shown display how the value grid was created for the final arrangement of *The Psychos*.

The grid acts as a map. Each square contains a different value; I compare that value to the overall tone of each image and then place them accordingly. What I aim for here is the unresolved narratives that leave room for more information or fluidity of meaning. The layout now and Trump's portrait no longer existed solely within the grid, but as the grid itself — he is the signifier and the signified. Also, in a grid arrangement, I see the drawings as individuals and as a group, where most of the images move light from frame to frame. Charcoal's absence of color unifies the group of portraits physically and visually. As a monochromatic group of drawings, from a distance any of the original variations, such as color or production quality, is less evident, however at a shorter distance, the differences previously mentioned separate them as individuals.

The fame these characters bring to the piece reaches a broader crowd beyond the realm of horror. What interests me is how this familiarity between viewer and film is applicable as a dialogue with the potential to exploit the label of “low-brow”, which unavoidably accompanies the horror genre. *The Psychos* uses the notoriety of the serial killer trope to establish common ground for conversation with a larger audience, the art world and beyond. Though some of the films chosen for the project land outside slasher subgenre, the serial killer trope, however, is still within the context of horror. A conversation about their relationship with one another and the world outside of the film is now possible.

CONCLUSION

The slasher film hadn't just entered our nightmares, it had entered our national consciousness.

Introduction, *Going to Pieces*³⁵

Rick Altman³⁶ states, “[h]orror films borrow from a nineteenth-century tradition their dependence on the presence of a monster.”³⁷ In the twenty-first century, the *psycho-serial-killer* as human represents this presence as the monster in slasher films. If social consequences for criminal acts separate victims from criminals, what about these individuals who seem to go unpunished for their illegal actions? Their threat is the nightmare to our daily existence, and sadly, these destructive forces that terrify and threaten us exist both on and off the screen. I see this with the re-installment of a serial killer trope spanning across different decades yet still relative to the present.

Returning to the notion that a particular trope develops in a specific social situation, does contemporary American horror films and their monsters directly reflect the moment in which they exist? Subjecting the viewer to a face-to-face confrontation, I pose this question, visualizing monstrosity and my fictional narrative as forty-five portraits in *The Psychos*.

Monstrosity, now a killer archetype of societal fear, my work seeks to redefine the conventional portrait and movie still — the image as a representation, not description. To illustrate these individuals existing independent from their films, I shift the original format from a flat film landscape to a vertical portrait. Through each drawing I construct and present my narrative, acting as both artist and director of *The Psychos*. The group of characters is unified both physically and visually by the black and white medium and the compositional grid. Examined as a group from a distance, any of the original variations, such as color or production quality, are indistinguishable, however, at a shorter distance, these differences previously mentioned separate the portraits from one another, depicting them as individuals. Grouped, hanging side by side, these individuals insinuate a relationship but allow the viewer to question their presence. Living in a time where *The Psychos* in power elicit violence, viewing revenge as

just another step towards success: “If someone attacks you, do not hesitate. Go for the jugular,”³⁸ the viewer can look to the horror genre to guide them through — and to help them recognize when the monster they fear is us. As for the future, of only one thing I’m certain, Trump’s portrait along with his destructive nature will continue to hang, in silence, amongst the criminals and *The Psychos*. Furthermore, I will keep striving to reflect on, the cultural and political conditions we live in through my evolving work as a woman artist practicing in the US.

Notes

- ¹ Mark Edmundson, American author and prizewinning scholar. He has published a number of works of literary and cultural criticism, and written for *The New Republic*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Nation*, and *Harper's*. <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/7814/mark-edmundson>
- ² Mark Edmundson, *Nightmare on Main Street: Angels, Sadoomasochism, and the Culture of the Gothic*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997): 63.
- ³ Vija Celmins, "Interview by Chuck Close," in *Vija Celmins*, Edited by William S. Bartman (New York: A.R.T. Press, 1992).
- ⁴ "Robert Longo," Interview by Keanu Reeves, *Interview Magazine*, June 2014.
- ⁵ Vija Celmins (1938 –), Latvian-American visual artist, best known for photo-realistic paintings and drawings of natural environments and phenomena such as the ocean, spider webs, star fields, and rocks. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vija_Celmins
- ⁶ Celmins, "Interview by Chuck Close," 12.
- ⁷ Robert Longo (1953 –), American painter and sculptor known for his profound ability to depict complex psychological states, his work strikes a balance between the very personal and the socially charged, reflecting the world we live in today. <https://www.rogallery.com/Longo/Longo-bio.htm>
- ⁸ Robert Longo in, "Robert Longo on Why "Making Art Is a Political Gesture, Period," interview by Terence Trouillot, Online Article, September 22, 2017, <https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/robert-longo-brooklyn-museum-proof-1086530>.
- ⁹ John Gage, (1938 – 2012), art historian and writer, known for his writing on the use of color in art, including *Colour and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction* (1993), which won the Mitchell Prize for Art History. <https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/collections/archive-collections/john-gage/>
- ¹⁰ John Gage, "Photographic Likeness," in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall, Critical Introductions to Art (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1997): 128.
- ¹¹ Shearer West, British-American art-historian, specialist area is the history of portraiture, she is the author, or editor, of nine books and many prize-winning essays and articles. <https://www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/content/professor-shearer-west>
- ¹² Shearer West, "What Is a Portrait?" in *Portraiture*, Oxford History of Art (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 21.
- ¹³ Marlene Dumas (1953 –), contemporary artist and painter, her figurative works earned her a place among the most influential painters of the 20th and 21st centuries. <http://www.artnet.com/artists/marlene-dumas/>
- ¹⁴ Wes Craven, *Scream*, DVD (Dimension Films, 1996).
- ¹⁵ Dave Kehr, American film critic. Wrote as a critic at the *Chicago Reader* and the *Chicago Tribune*, and as a columnist for *The New York Times* on DVD releases. Currently, curator in the Department of Film of the Museum of Modern Art. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Kehr
- ¹⁶ Dave Kehr, "Other Times, Other Monsters: Second Wave Horror Films," *New York Times*, October 21, 2009, sec. DVD, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/25/movies/homevideo/25kehr.html>.
- ¹⁷ Carol Clover, film and literature scholar, and horror expert, credited with developing the "final girl" theory in her book *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (1992) which changed both popular and academic conceptions of gender in horror films. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carol_J._Clover
- ¹⁸ Carol Clover, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).
- ¹⁹ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws*, 22.
- ²⁰ Bruce Kawin, film and literature scholar, *Horror and the Horror Film*. <https://www.cubookstore.com/c-390-bruce-f-kawin.aspx>
- ²¹ Bruce F. Kawin, *Horror and the Horror Film*. (London: Anthem Press, 2012): 3.
- ²² John Carpenter, producer and writer of *Halloween*, the film that started the "golden era" of slasher genre.
- ²³ John Carpenter, *Nightmares in Red, White, and Blue: The Evolution of the American Horror Film*. Directed by Andrew Monument. Online, Documentary. written by Joseph Maddrey. 2009. Gravitas Ventures, 2010. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0789KLGVQ/>
- ²⁴ E. Ann Kaplan, American author and director, known for her widely published and influential research on women in film, also introduced the concept of *imperial gaze*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._Ann_Kaplan
- ²⁵ E. Ann Kaplan, *Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera* (London: Methuen, 1983): 15.
- ²⁶ Kehr, "Other Times, Other Monsters", 2009.

²⁷ John Kenneth Muir, *Nightmares in Red, White, and Blue*, 2009.

²⁸ Francisco Goya, *Los Caprichos*, caption from the "Prado" etching version, plate 43, "*La fantasia abandonada de la razon, produce monstrous imposibles: unida con ella, es madre de las artes y origen de sus maravillas.*" in *Visual Theology: Forming and Transforming the Community Through the Arts*, Edited by Robin M. Jensen and Kimberly J. Vrudny (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2009): 39.

²⁹ Kawin, *Horror and the Horror Film*, 32.

³⁰ Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746 – 1828), also known as Francisco Goya, Spanish artist whose paintings, drawings, and engravings reflected contemporary historical upheavals and influenced important 19th- and 20th-century painters. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Francisco-Goya>

³¹ Piotr Uklański (1968 –), contemporary Polish-American artist, his works exploits multiple media (sculpture, photography, collage, performance, and film) and promiscuously absorbs diverse cultural references. <https://gagosian.com/artists/piotr-uklanski/>

³² Piotr Uklański, *Real Nazis*, Edition Patrick Frey (Series) 252 (Zürich: Edition Patrick Frey, 2017).

³³ Joseph Maddrey, *Nightmares in Red, White and Blue: The Evolution of the American Horror Film* (Jefferson, N.C.; London: McFarland, 2004): 48.

³⁴ Mary Harron, *American Psycho*, DVD (Lionsgate, 2000).

³⁵ Adam Rockoff, "What Is a Slasher Film?" in *Going to Pieces: The Rise and Fall of the Slasher Film, 1978-1986* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2002): 6.

³⁶ Rick Altman, film and literature scholar, author of *Film/Genre* (1999), which won the Society for Cinema Studies Katherine S. Kovacs prize for the best film book published in 1999. <https://clas.uiowa.edu/cinematic-arts/node/21>

³⁷ Rick Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre," *Film Theory and Criticism*, Edited by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 639.

³⁸ Donald Trump, "Chapter 6: Revenge," in *Think Big and Kick Ass: In Business and Life* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007).

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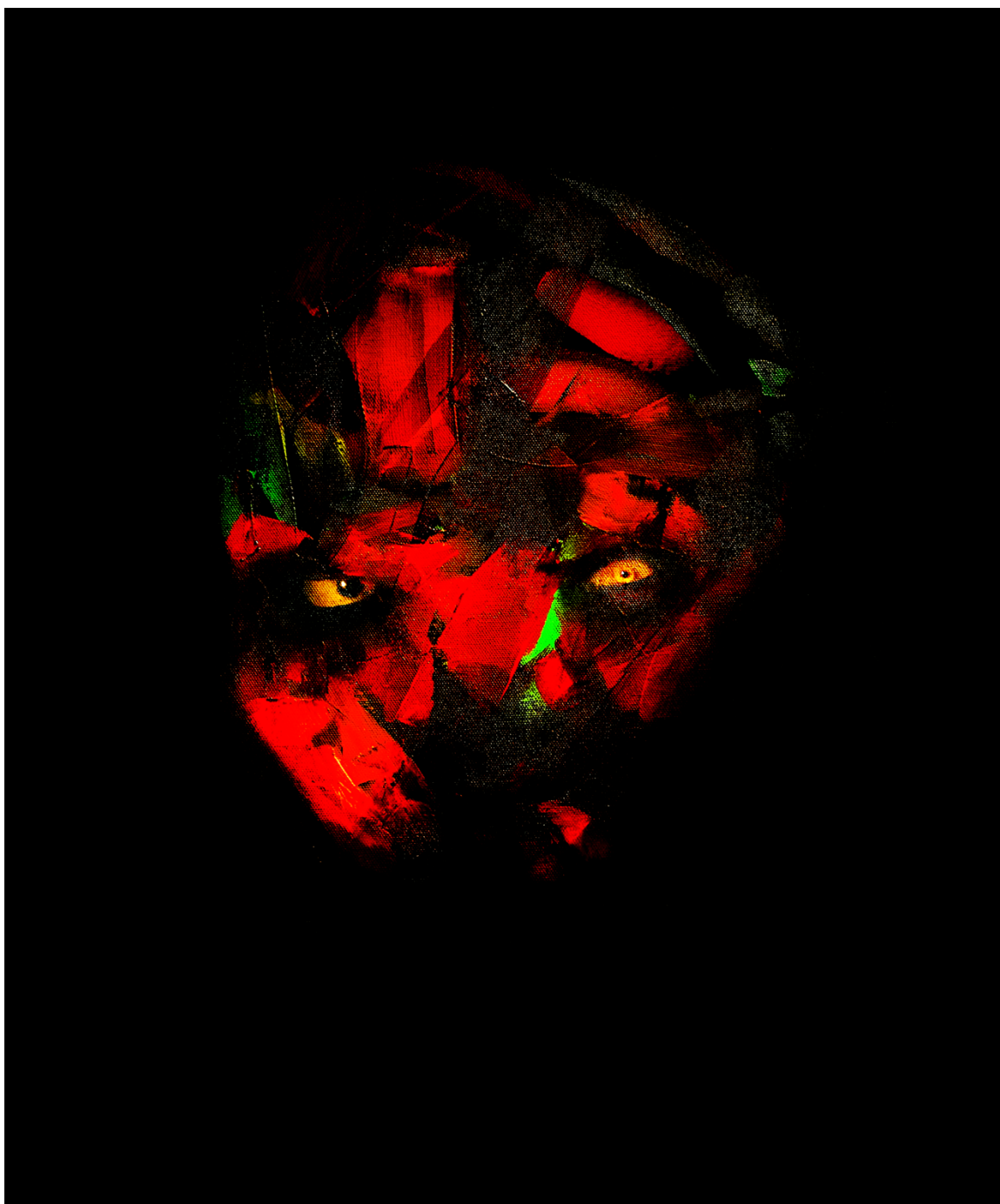


Plate 1

Paula Stevenson
Untitled (Monster 1)
2017
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 20 in.

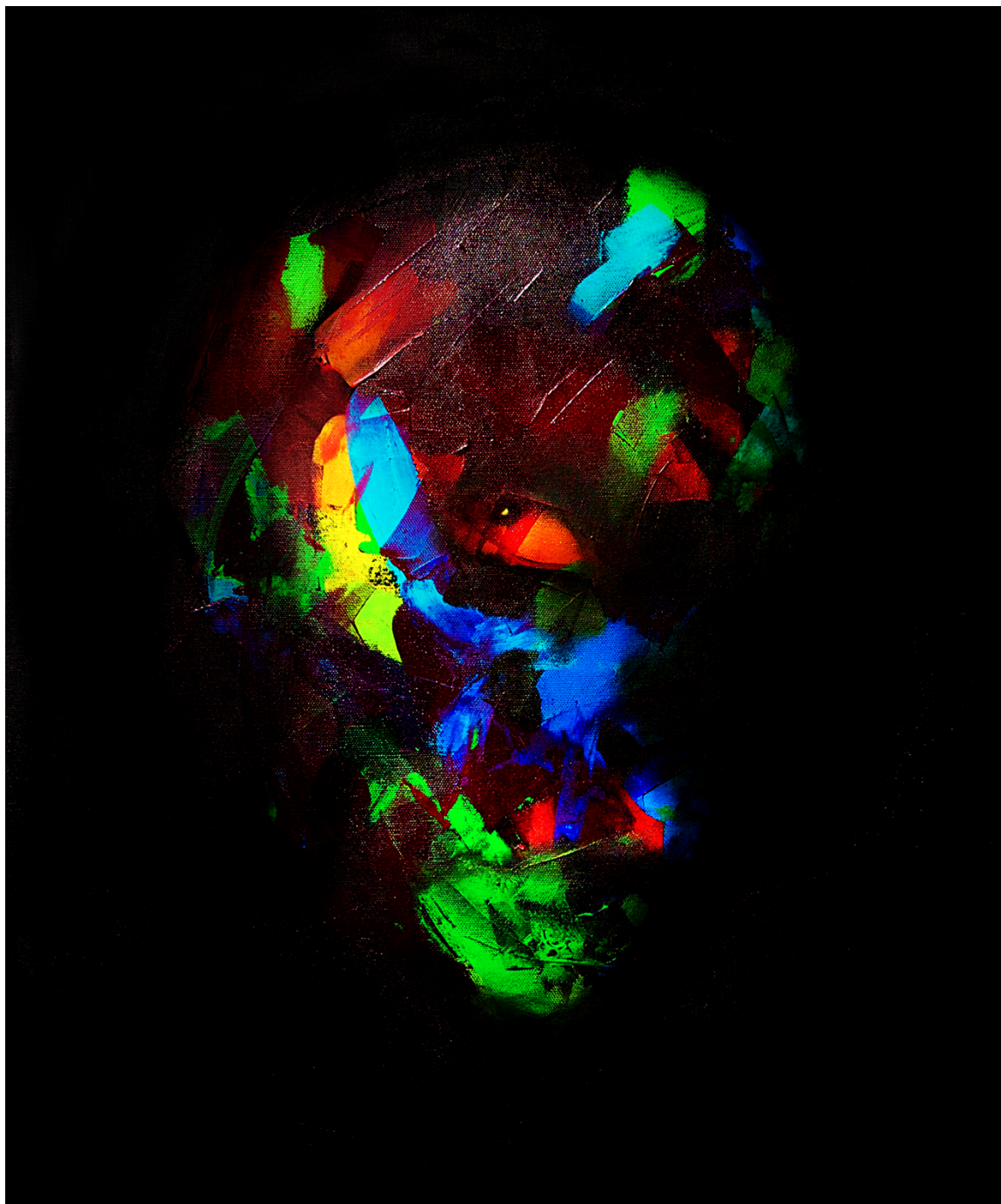


Plate 2

Paula Stevenson
Untitled (Monster 2)
2017
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 20 in.

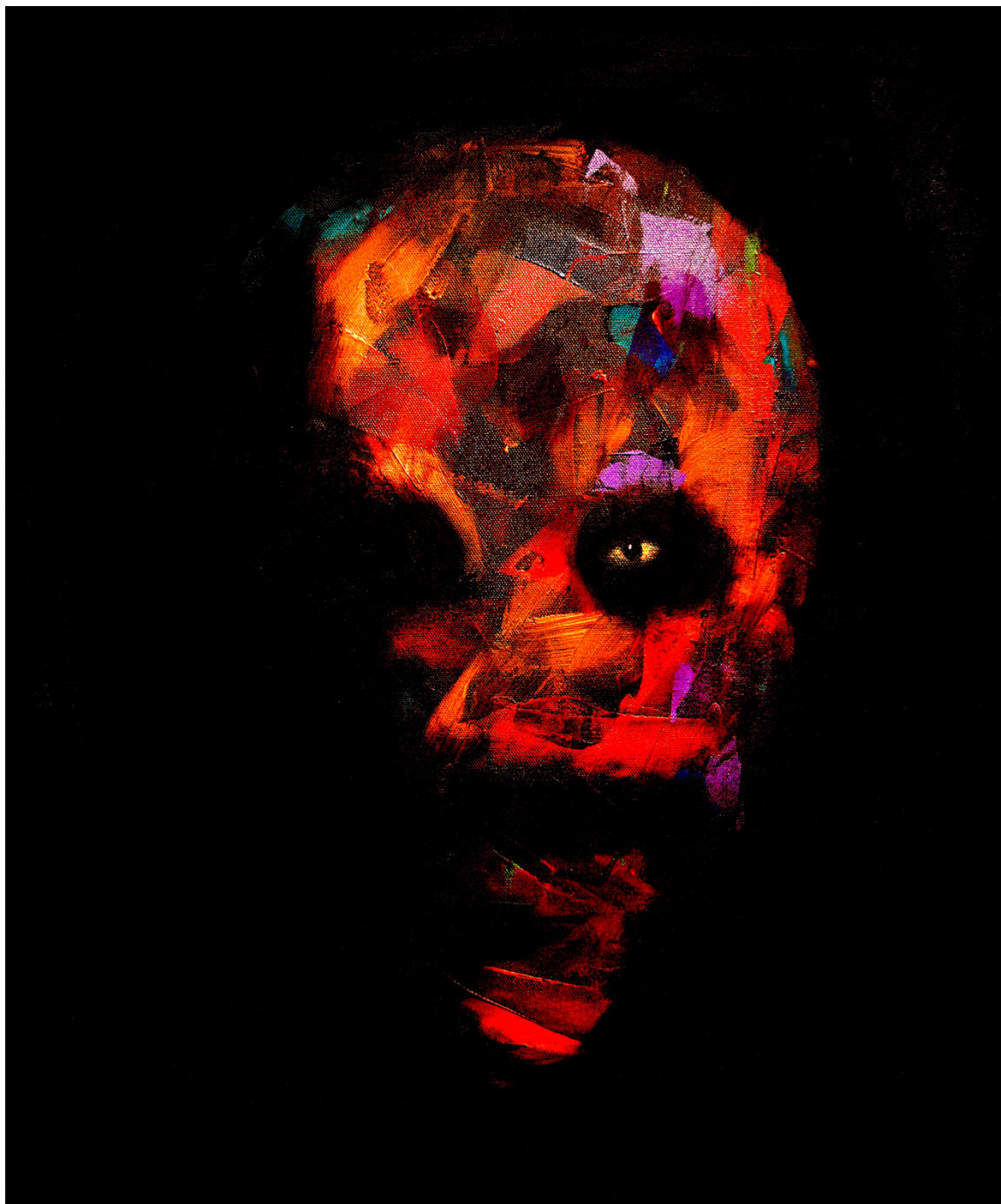


Plate 3

Paula Stevenson
Untitled (Monster 3)
2017
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 20 in.

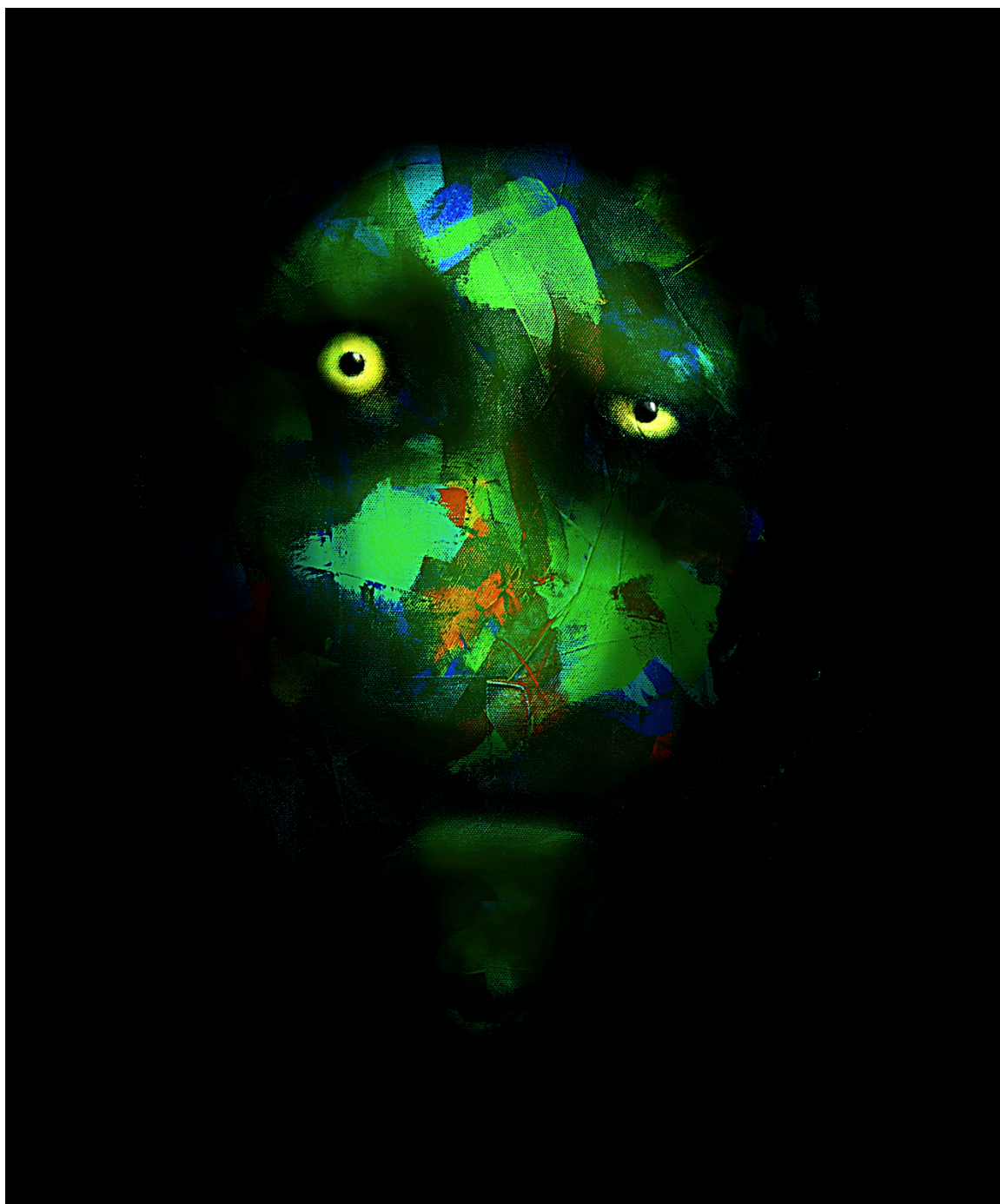


Plate 4

Paula Stevenson
Untitled (Monster 4)
2017
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 20 in.

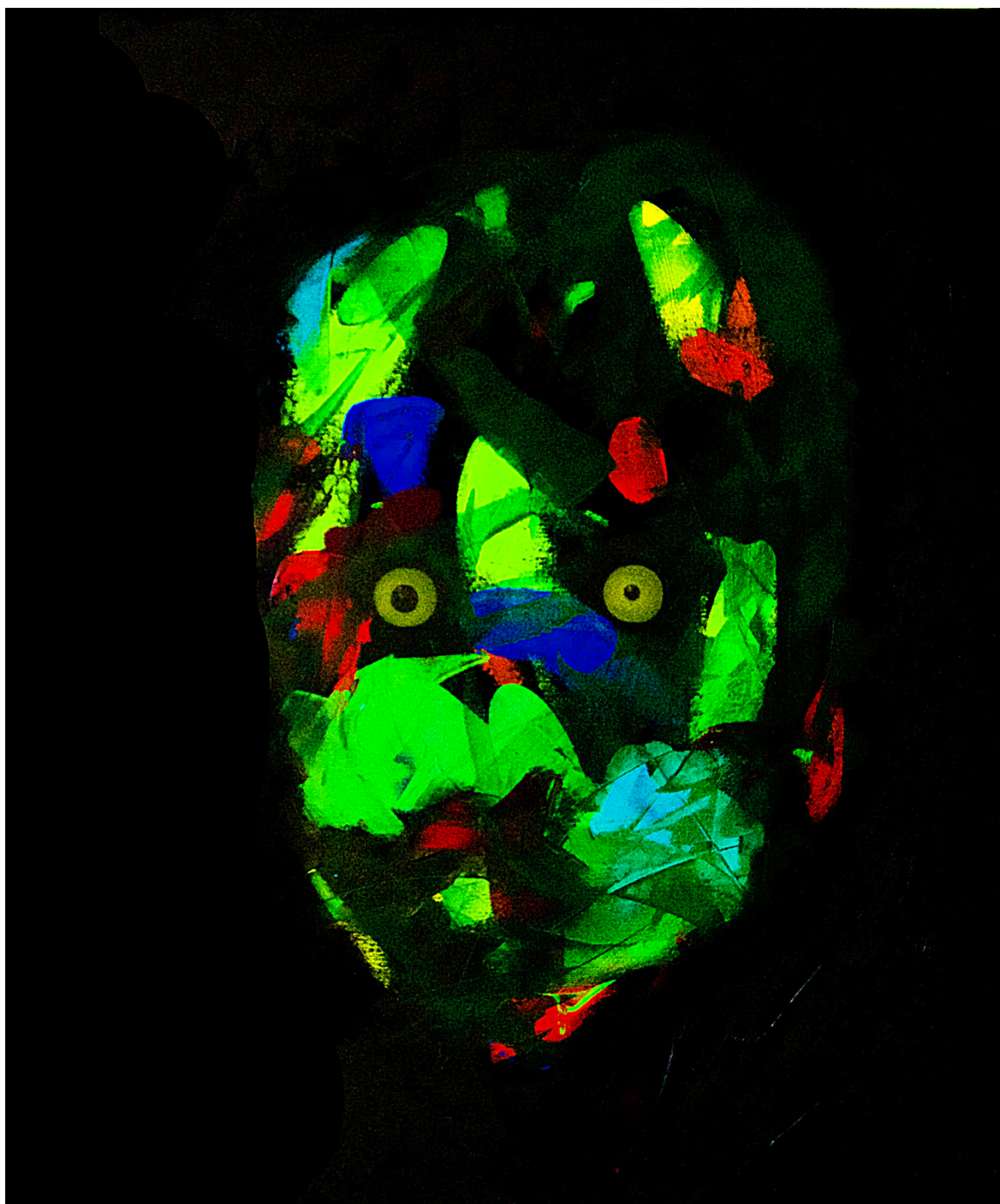


Plate 5

Paula Stevenson
Untitled (Monster 5)
2017
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 20 in.

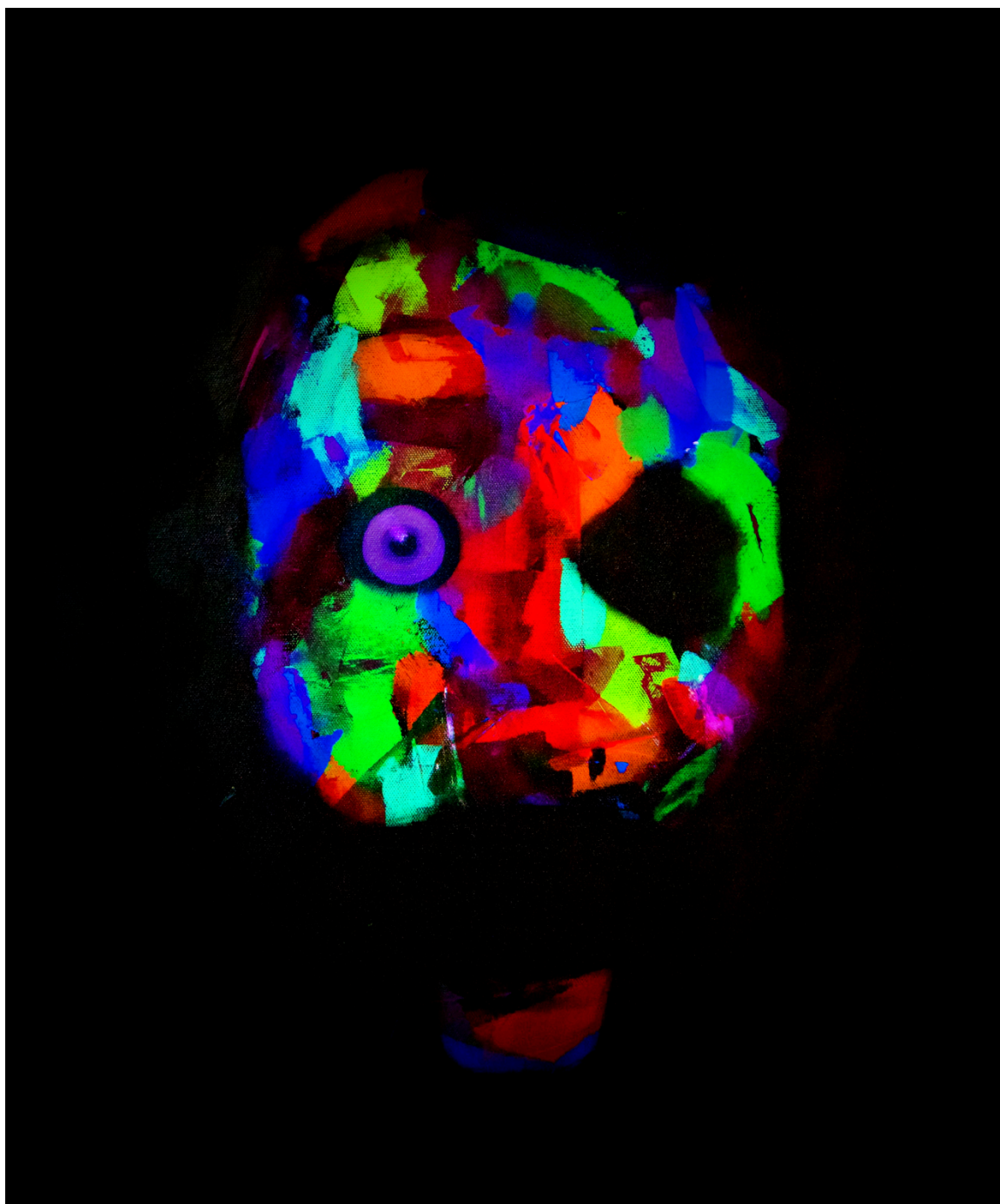


Plate 6

Paula Stevenson
Untitled (Monster 6)
2017
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 20 in.



Plate 7

Paula Stevenson
Untitled (Monster 7)
Drowning in A Sea of Monsters
2017
Acrylic on canvas
72 x 60 in.

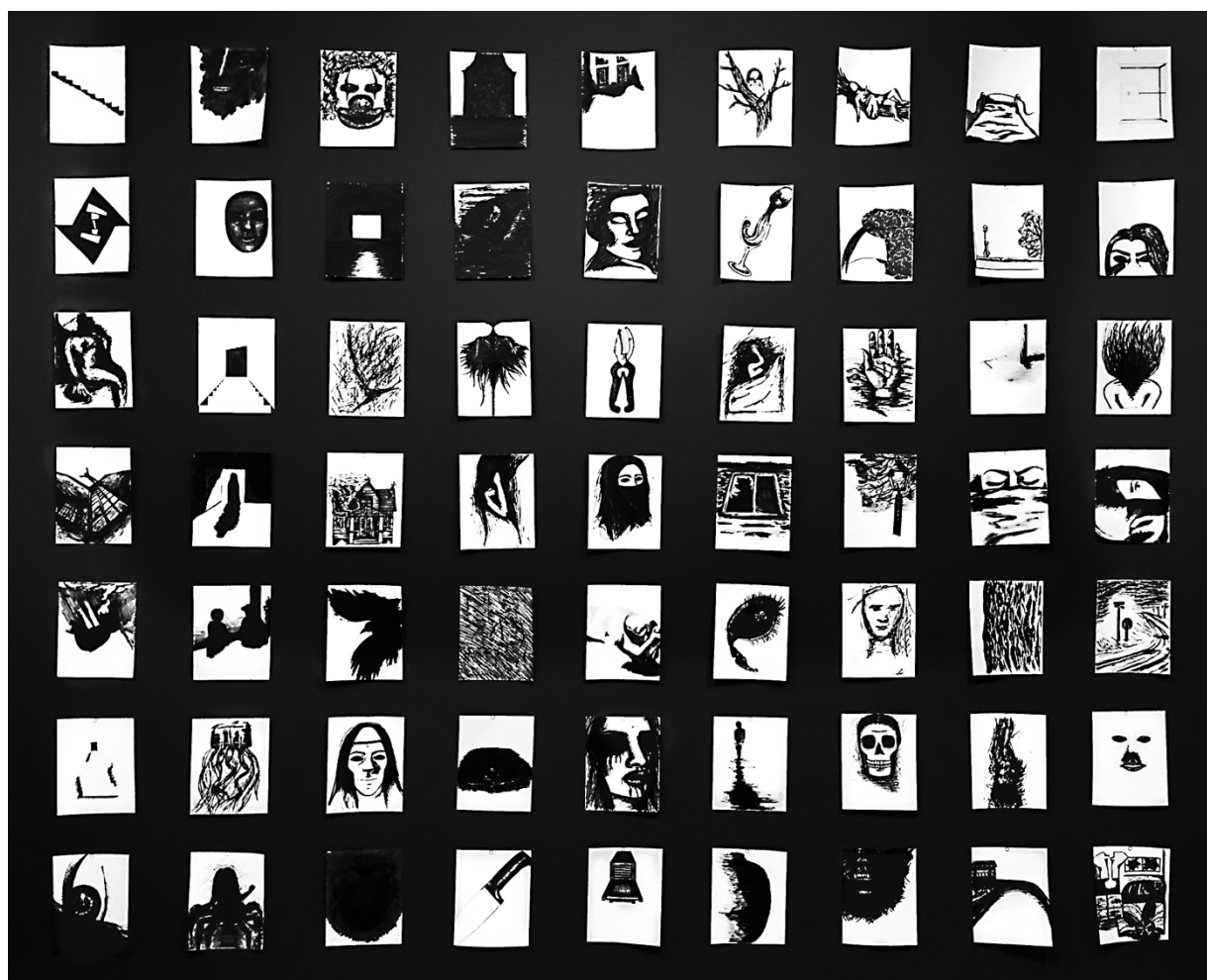


Plate 8

Paula Stevenson
Nothing but A Dream (wall display)
2016
Ink on paper, 63 drawings
94 x 104 in. (10 x 8 in. each)



Plate 9

Paula Stevenson
Untitled (Nun) (detail)
2016
Ink on paper
10 x 8 in.



Plate 10

Paula Stevenson
Untitled (Sleepless) (detail)
2016
Ink on paper
10 x 8 in.

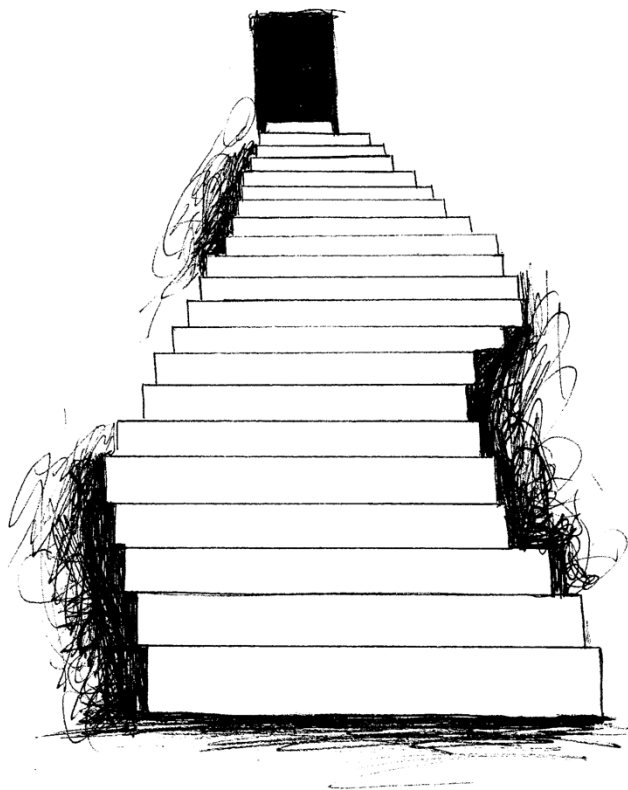


Plate 11

Paula Stevenson
Untitled (Stairs) (detail)
2016
Ink on paper
10 x 8 in.

Filmography

This filmography includes only American horror films released since 1960. Each entry includes the following information: title, release date, production and/or distribution company, director (D), author of screenplay (S), original source if adaptation, and cast (C).

American Psycho (2000). Lionsgate. D: Mary Harron. S: Mary Harron, Guinevere Turner. From the novel by Bret Easton Ellis. C: Christian Bale, Willem Dafoe, Jared Leto, Josh Lucas, Bill Sage, Samantha Mathis, Cara Seymour, Justin Theroux, Reese Witherspoon.

Blood Feast (1963). Box Office Spectaculars. D: Herschell Gordon Lewis. S: Allison Louise Downe. C: Mal Arnold, William Kerwin, Connie Mason, Lyn Bolton, Scott H. Hall.

Burning, The (1981). Filmways. D: Tony Maylam. S: Peter Lawrence, Bob Weinstein. C: Brian Matthews, Leah Ayres, Brian Backer, Larry Joshua, Lou David.

Cherry Falls (2000). Rogue Pictures. D: Geoffrey Wright. S: Ken Selden. C: Brittany Murphy, Jay Mohr, Gabriel Mann, Michael Biehn.

Collector, The (2009). LD Entertainment. D: Marcus Dunstan. S: Marcus Dunstan, Patrick Melton. C: Josh Stewart, Michael Reilly Burke, Andrea Roth, Juan Fernandez, Karley Scott Collins, Madeline Zima, Robert Wisdom.

Don't Answer the Phone (1980). Crown International. D: Robert Hammer. S: Michael D. Castle, Robert Hammer. C: Nicholas Worth, Flo Lawrence, James Westmoreland, Denise Galik, Ben Frank.

Eyes of a Stranger (1981). Warner Brothers. D: Ken Wiederhorn. S: Mark Jackson, E. L. Bloom. C: Lauren Tewes, John Di Santi, Jennifer Jason Leigh.

Friday the 13th Part 2 (1981). Paramount. D: Steve Miner. S: Martin Kitrosser, Carol Watson. C: Dana Kimmell, Paul Kratka, Tracie Savage, Jeffrey Rogers.

Halloween (1978). Compass International. D: John Carpenter. S: John Carpenter. C: Jamie Lee Curtis, Donald Pleasence, Nancy Loomis, P. J. Soles, Charles Cyphers, Nick Castle.

Hannibal (2001). MGM/Universal. D: Ridley Scott. S: David Mamet, Steven Zaillian C: Anthony Hopkins, Julianne Moore, Ray Liotta, Frankie R. Faison, Giancarlo Giannini, Francesca Neri.

Hell Fest (2018). Lionsgate. D: Gregory Plotkin. S: Seth M. Sherwood, Blair Butler, Akela Cooper. Original story by William Penick, Christopher Sey, Stephen Susco. C: Amy Forsyth, Bex Taylor-Klaus, Reign Edwards, Tony Todd, Stephen Conroy.

Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer (1986). Greycat Films. D: John McNaughton. S: Richard Fire, John McNaughton. C: Michael Rooker, Tom Towles, Tracy Arnold.

Hitcher, The (1986). HBO/Silver Screen. D: Robert Harmon. S: Eric Red. C: Rutger Hauer, C. Thomas Howell, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Jeffrey DeMunn.

Hush (2016). Blumhouse/Intrepid. D: Mike Flanagan. S: Mike Flanagan, Kate Siegel. C: John Gallagher Jr., Michael Trucco, Kate Siegel.

I Know What You Did Last Summer (1997). Columbia. D: Jim Gillespie. S: Kevin Williamson. C: Jennifer Love Hewitt, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Ryan Phillippe, Freddie Prince Jr., Muse Watson.

Joy Ride (2001). 20th Century Fox. D: John Dahl. S: J. J. Abrams, Clay Tarver. C: Steve Zahn, Paul Walker, Leelee Sobieski, Jessica Bowman, Matthew Kimbrough, Ted Levine.

Laid to Rest (2009). Anchor Bay. D: Robert Green Hall. S: Robert Green Hall. C: Bobbi Sue Luther, Kevin Gage, Sean Whalen, Johnathon Schaech, Thomas Dekker, Nick Principe, Richard Lynch, Lena Headey.

Last House on the Left, The (1972). Hallmark/American International. D: Wes Craven. S: Wes Craven. C: David Alex Hess, Lucy Grantham, Sandra Cassell, Marc Sheffler.

Madman (1981). Jensen Farley. D: Joe Giannone. S: Joe Giannone. C: Paul Ehlers, Gaylen Ross, Tony Fish, Harriet Bass, Seth Jones, Jan Claire, Alex Murphy, Jimmy Steele, Carl Fredericks, Michael Sullivan.

Maniac Cop (1988). Shapiro-Glickenhau. D: William Lustig. S: Larry Cohen. C: Tom Atkins, Bruce Campbell, Laurene Landon, Richard Roundtree, William Smith, Robert Z'Dar, Sheree North.

Midnight Movie (2008). Bigfoot. D: Jack Messitt. S: Jack Messitt, Mark Garbett. C: Arthur Roberts, Michael Swan, Jon Briddell, Daniel Bonjour, Greg Cirulnick, Mandell Maughan, Michael Schwartz.

Mr. Brooks (2007). MGM. D: Bruce A. Evans. S: Bruce A. Evans, Raynold Gideon. C: Kevin Costner, Demi Moore, Dane Cook, William Hurt, Marg Helgenberger, Danielle Panabaker.

Mutilator, The (1984). Ocean King. D: Buddy Cooper, John S. Douglass. S: Buddy Cooper. C: Jack Chatham, Matt Mitler, Bill Hitchcock, Ruth Martinez, Connie Rogers, Morey Lampley, Frances Raines.

My Bloody Valentine 3D (2009). Lionsgate. D: Patrick Lussier. S: Zane Smith, Todd Farmer. Original story by Stephen Miller. C: Jensen Ackles, Jaime King, Kerr Smith, Betsy Rue, Kevin Tighe.

Nightbreed (1990). 20th Century Fox. D: Clive Barker. S: Clive Barker. From the novel Cabal. C: Craig Sheffer, Anne Bobby, David Cronenberg, Charles Haid.

Nightmare on Elm Street, A (1984). New Line. D: Wes Craven. S: Wes Craven. C: Amanda Wyss, Heather Langenkamp, Ronee Blakely, Robert Englund.

Nightwatch (1997). Dimension. D: Ole Bornedal. S: Ole Bornedal, Steven Soderbergh. C: Ewan McGregor, Patricia Arquette, Josh Brolin, Lauren Graham, Nick Nolte.

Prom Night (2008). Sony/Screen Gem. D: Nelson McCormick. S: J. S. Cardone. C: Brittany Snow, Scott Porter, Jessica Stroup, Dana Davis, Collins Pennie, Kelly Blatz, James Ransone, Brianne Davis, Johnathon Schaech, Idris Elba.

Prowler, The (1981). Sandhurst. D: Joseph Zito. S: Glenn Leopold, Neal F. Barbera. C: Vicki Dawson, Christopher Goutman, Cindy Weintraub, Farley Granger.

Psycho (1960). Paramount/Universal. D: Alfred Hitchcock. S: Joseph Stefano. C: Anthony Perkins, Vera Miles, John Gavin, Martin Balsam, John McIntire, Janet Leigh.

Saw (2004). Lionsgate. D: James Wan. S: Leigh Whannell. C: Tobin Bell, Cary Elwes, Danny Glover, Monica Potter, Michael Emerson, Ken Leung, Leigh Whannell.

Scream (1996). Dimension. D: Wes Craven. S: Kevin Williamson. C: Neve Campbell, Courtney Cox, Matthew Lillard, Rose McGowan, Skeet Ulrich, Drew Barrymore.

Silent Night, Deadly Night (1984). TriStar. D: Charles E. Sellier Jr. S: Michael Hickey. C: Lilyan Chauvin, Gilmer McCormick, Toni Nero, Robert Brian Wilson.

Silence of the Lambs, The (1991). Orion. D: Jonathan Demme. S: Ted Tally. From the novel by Thomas Harris. C: Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, Scott Glenn, Ted Levine, Anthony Heald.

Sorority Row (2009). Summit. D: Stewart Hendler. S: Josh Stolberg, Pete Goldfinger. C: Briana Evigan, Leah Pipes, Rumer Willis, Jamie Chung, Audrina Patridge, Julian Morris, Margo Harshman, Matt O'Leary.

Taking Lives (2004). Warner Brothers. D: D. J. Caruso. S: Jon Bokenkamp. C: Angelina Jolie, Ethan Hawke, Kiefer Sutherland, Gena Rowlands, Olivier Martinez.

Terrifier (2018). Epic/Dread Central. D: Damien Leone. S: Damien Leone. C: Jenna Kanell, David Howard Thornton, Samantha Scaffidi, Catherine Corcoran, Pooya Mohseni, Matt McAllister.

Texas Chain Saw Massacre, The (1974). New Line/Bryanston. D: Tobe Hooper. S: Tobe Hooper, Kim Henkel. C: Marilyn Burns, Allen Danziger, Gunnar Hanse.

Toolbox Murders, The (1978). Cal-Am Artists. D: Dennis Donnelly. S: Ann Kindberg, Robert Easter, Neva Friedenn. C: Cameron Mitchell, Tim Donnelly, Pamelyn Ferdin.

Toolbox Murders (2004). Lions Gate. D: Tobe Hooper. S: Jace Anderson, Adam Gierasch. C: Cameron Mitchell, Tim Donnelly, Pamelyn Ferdin.

Watcher, The (2000). Universal. D: Joe Charbanic. S: Darcy Meyers, David Elliot, Clay Ayers. C: James Spader, Marisa Tomei, Ernie Hudson, Chris Ellis, Keanu Reeves.

When A Stranger Calls (1979). Columbia. D: Fred Walton. S: Fred Walton, Steve Feke. C: Carol Kane, Charles Durning, Colleen Dewhurst, Tony Beckley.

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